



MELIPHAGA ALBIGULARIS: Gould.

MELITHREPTUS ALBOGULARIS, *Gould.*

White-throated Honey-eater.

Melithreptus albugularis, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., November 1847.

THIS species, which inhabits the northern and eastern parts of Australia, is very abundant on the Cobourg Peninsula, and I have received specimens from the neighbourhood of Moreton Bay. The total absence of any black mark beneath the lower mandible and the pure whiteness of the throat serve to distinguish it from every other known species; the colouring of the back, which inclines to rich wax-yellow, is also a character peculiar to it. It is very numerous around the settlement at Port Essington, where it occurs in families of from ten to fifteen in number; it is of a very pugnacious disposition, often fighting with other birds much larger than itself; while among the leafy branches of the *Eucalypti*, which are its favourite trees, it frequently pours forth a loud ringing whistling note, a correct idea of which is not easily conveyed. Like its near ally the sexes present no other external difference than the smaller size of the female; and the young at the same age present a similar style of colouring to that observable in the *M. lunulatus* and *M. chloropsis*, the head and sides of the neck being brown instead of black, and the naked skin above the eye scarcely perceptible.

The food consists entirely of insects and the pollen of flowers, in searching for which it displays a great variety of positions, sometimes threading the leaves on the smaller branches, and at others clinging to the very extremities of the bunches of flowers.

The nest, which is always suspended to a drooping branch, and which swings about with every breath of wind, is formed of dried narrow strips of the soft bark of the *Melaleuca*. The eggs, which are generally two in number, are of a light salmon-colour, blotched and freckled with reddish brown, and are about nine lines long by six lines broad.

Upper surface greenish wax-yellow; head black; crescent-shaped mark at the occiput, chin and all the under surface white; wings and tail brown margined with greenish wax-yellow; irides dull red; bill brownish black; legs and feet greenish grey, with a tinge of blue on the front of the tarsi.

The Plate represents the two sexes of the natural size.